

W. C. T. U. NOTES.

THE RAISING.

CLARA MARCELLE GREENE.

"Boys, do you know what a 'raising' is?" asked papa, who had promised us a story when we gathered about the library fire after tea. Little Ted nestled close to me, and laid his head on my lap.

"A 'raising'?" repeated ten-year-old Otho, with the look and tone of superior wisdom peculiar to his age. "Oh, yes, it's something about farms and cows, isn't it?"

"Oh, oh, oh!" derided younger Jack, doubling himself over the knees of his first pants; "I know better than that; it's what you put in pudding!"

A general shout extinguished poor little Jack, who hung his head and fell to admiring his pants for comfort.

"And what does papa's baby think a 'raising' is?" said papa, stooping over and smothering kisses in little Ted's neck, between his tumbled curls. A queer little shrug of the shoulders and a stifled laugh were the only response, and papa proceeded to gratify the curiosity of his eager listeners.

"Down East," where I was born, when a man wanted to build a house or barn, men did not then come, as now, and bring a lot of fine timbers, ready-made and fitted, and run up stick after stick, and brace after brace, like canes, so fast that in twenty-four hours the painters are beginning to paint.

"Instead of that, a carpenter sat day after day, patiently hewing by hand great timbers, until enough were hewn to make the square foundation, the upright corners, and the top and ends of the roof. Then the man gave out word to his neighbors to come on a certain day and help him and the carpenter raise the great timbers into position. That was the 'raising'."

"When it was finished, there stood the skeleton of a building to be covered and the men were all invited into the house for dinner. Besides that, what else do you think they had to cheer them on through the 'raising'?"

"Brass band," guessed Otho, who had headed a procession of seven boys with four torchlights and a harmonica, and felt his blushing honors thick upon him.

"Lemonade," ventured Jack, a good deal subdued by the ignominy of his first failure.

"No, my boys, a jug of rum with a tin cup was set out near the men, who went to it and drank as often as they pleased. Some of them only drank after one of the heaviest timbers was hoisted into place, with much hard straining and tugging, and shouting of orders. Others drank oftener, and at night were quite intoxicated."

"A very sad thing happened at one raising that I remember. The building was a large barn, a hundred feet long, and many men and boys were there, among them a father and son. The son, John Dudley, was about fifteen years old, my own age."

"His father was often drunk, and that day proved no exception. John was a handsome, strong-limbed fellow, with a fine head, ruddy cheeks and black eyes, the idol and only hope of his mother, a patient, hard-working woman who had done her best to keep her boy out of his father's footsteps."

"I think he never tasted liquor before. But that day I saw him go around the jug several times till a rough fellow dared him to drink. John was bold, bright boy, and he laughingly seized the cup and started the liquor. Several times afterward I saw him do it, and when he started for home he reeled a little."

"It was a keen, bitter night in December, and soon began to snow. At daylight a neighbor tapped at our window to know if we had seen John Dudley. He had not reached home, and men were looking for him. My father and I quickly dressed and went to join in the search. Fields, forests, barns and fences were all inspected, but no clue was found till a woman said she saw him crossing her field toward dark, and that he seemed bewildered."

"Jack Simpson and I started that way and soon found tracks in the thin snow. We followed them in silence with beating hearts."

"Turning the corner of a high stone-heap, Jack suddenly started back with a great cry. There lay the dreadful sight before us. John Dudley lying in the lee of the rock, frozen to death. His cap lay a little way off and the keen wind was blowing through his hair."

"I saw it all at a glance, and stopped for nothing. I ran to turn his mother back, who was following fast behind. But she read the whole terrible truth in my face, and rushed by me like a mad creature. I could not tell you, my dears, any more of that scene. It was plain that the liquor bewildered him, that he lost his way, and being benumbed with the cold and the drink, he lay down under the shelter of the rock to his death."

"So we buried him, in the presence of a sobbing congregation; and God knows at whose door to lay the sin." Our family circle was hushed when papa finished his story. Little Ted had long before been gathered up in papa's arms with his sleeping head on his shoulder, while Otho and Jack sat looking into fire with big tears brimming their eyelashes.

An old gentleman in New Hampshire gives this as his verdict on the race after an experience of eighty years. A white-ribboner makes the report: "I have known lots of folks in the course of my life, and something was the matter with the hull on 'em." Another old gentleman reports in this fashion, after a long pilgrimage on the way of life: "I have had any quantities of different kinds of troubles, only the most on 'em hain't never happened."

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